

Dicky Birds Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Linda Close

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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Description of the setting

Dicky Birds Nursery is privately owned and is one of a chain of six settings. It is accommodated in a Victorian semi-detached house located close to Wimbledon Station in south-west London. The local authority is Merton. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 62 children in the early years age group and of these, not more than 38 may be under two years at any one time. The nursery opens at 8.00am and closes at 6.00pm every weekday throughout the year, apart from a week at Christmas and bank holidays.

Children are cared for in rooms on the ground, first and second floors of the building. Outdoor play areas are accessed from the ground floor playrooms. There are 19 members of staff and most are appropriately qualified. A dedicated cook prepares children's meals on the premises. There are currently 62 children on roll who attend full or part-time. Staff take and collect children from several local primary schools to provide wraparound care for those who attend school nursery classes on a part-time basis. Children are regularly taken on outings in the local area.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The setting meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage because staff know each child well and plan interesting activities that help them learn. Most areas of the setting are safe and security is good. Partnerships with parents are good and this helps the staff to meet the individual needs of the children. Children are making good progress given their age and starting points. The manager and the provider evaluate the nursery's service to children effectively overall. They are eager to maintain good standards of care and they make sure that most areas of weakness are promptly improved.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- make sure that the staff room is consistently inaccessible to children
- ensure that the organisation and use of the rooms set aside for the youngest children enable them to have scope for free movement and easy access to resources.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager is well informed about safeguarding issues. She has attended training for leaders and she shares her learning with staff. The policy and procedure for safeguarding is available to parents and carers. Staff and parents

contribute to the self-evaluation document which is detailed and perceptive. The setting has made most of the improvements recommended at the time of the last inspection although the range of programmable toys to support children's learning is still rather limited. Staff are encouraged to attend training courses to promote their professional development. Almost all of the staff are qualified and the few who are unqualified are working towards relevant qualifications. Annual appraisal helps staff to identify their strengths and weaknesses. The provider and manager offer opportunities for staff to work with different age groups and in other settings in the group. The manager shares her vision for ongoing improvement with the staff. She works closely with local authority inclusion and development workers who visit often, offer new ideas and provide guidance and training for the whole staff team. Staff provide information about children's progress to local schools when children transfer.

Older children and the toddlers accommodated on the ground floor enjoy free flow play and easy access to the very well resourced outdoor areas. They have an extensive range of good quality books, imaginative play materials and toys. Children in rooms on the second floor of the building have a stimulating selection of activities and resources made easily accessible to them. They use the outdoor spaces at regular intervals during the day and go on local outings. The youngest children have two play rooms and a dedicated sleep room on the first floor. They have a good selection of resources but sometimes they do not have maximum scope for free movement, particularly when they are all using the main playroom at the same time.

Staff observe and record children's individual progress with care and if they have any concerns they talk to parents and find ways to help the children. They consult inclusion workers from the local authority and act on their advice. Individual learning plans are set for all children based on their individual interests and learning needs. New planning and record keeping documents are used effectively. Staff have a good awareness of the requirements of differing groups of children, for example, adapting learning styles to meet their needs. Staff make parents and carers very welcome in the setting. The nursery currently supports a variety of children with English as an additional language. Staff are proactive, asking parents for words in the child's home language to assist the children when at the nursery. Each room has developed a 'visual' routine to help any child who may need this. Staff support children and adults extremely well through difficult times and sensitively care for children with specific needs. Parent representatives help to organise informal social events and fund raising activities.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Staff are good role models. They are patient and polite to the children and as a result the children's behaviour is very good. Staff engage children in discussion over activities which include shape recognition and counting using real materials and objects. Children solve problems through exploring what will happen when they run wheeled toys down lengths of gutter piping in the outdoor play area. They make their cars run faster by making the angle of the pipes steeper. The art

areas are arranged so that children can select materials freely and find ways to join things together. The provision is influenced by the Steiner philosophy of education which offers children many sensory learning opportunities using natural materials. Children learn about planting seeds and caring for growing plants. They learn to measure, mix and blend ingredients to make dough and even the youngest children enjoy cooking activities. The older children also learn how to sew using an electric sewing machine under close adult supervision to ensure their safety.

There are good opportunities for mark making in all rooms. Progress is good and some of the older children can write their names using well formed letters. Children in all rooms enjoy stories alone and with staff and they listen well. Children develop their communication skills through valuable conversations with adults. Discussions and activities, which include counting, help children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills for the future. There are some resources for information technology including a digital camera and some battery operated toys although there are few resources of this type available for the youngest children. All children show that they feel safe in the nursery in the way they approach staff for cuddles and support. Staff and parents work together to make the settling-in period a happy time. Staff reassure the babies and they successfully distract them if they are tearful. The manager and her team check the setting every day for safety. However, staff occasionally leave their staff room door unsecured. This room is accessible from the outdoor play area and it is not safety checked with children in mind.

A fire safety consultant has assessed the building and his recommendations are carefully heeded to keep the children safe. Unannounced evacuation practices take place on a regular basis so that children and staff in all rooms know how to leave the building quickly and safely. Risk assessments are made for every outing and children learn about road safety and about keeping safe in public places. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is progressing well. They are gaining an understanding of diversity through worthwhile activities which include stories, art work, baking samosas and designing salt dough candleholders for Diwali. Children are learning about helping others by taking part in fund raising events.

Staff are aware that children located on the upper floors of the building do not have as much access as those in the rooms on the ground floor, although there are regular opportunities each day, as well as visits into the local area most days. Nearly every member of staff holds a current first aid qualification which promotes children's safety well. Medication, accidents and existing injuries are recorded correctly and monitored with care. Children learn to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Fresh drinking water is available in all rooms and staff encourage the children to take frequent drinks. The cook and the provider work closely together in relation to the planning of meals and the selection of wholesome, fresh ingredients. Staff sit down to eat with the children. They chat with them and actively promote good table manners and independence.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

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| How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 2 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement | 2 |

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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| How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed? | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning | 2 |
| The extent to which children feel safe | 2 |
| The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which children make a positive contribution | 2 |
| The extent to which children develop skills for the future | 2 |

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